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## Italian Masterpieces: Portrayal of a Culture through its Cinema

PROF. ELEONORA FORNASARI

<b>Area of study:</b>	Cultural Studies
<b>Area Code:</b>	FS/CMS310su
<b>Credit</b>	6 ECTS
<b>Dates</b>	7 – 18 July (2 weeks)

### Course description

The course will introduce students to the magic world of the “director superstar” Federico Fellini, who influenced the art of cinema all over the world.

Here’s a quotation from American director David Lynch, to give an example of how influential Fellini was to international directors: “If I had to choose films that represent, for me, examples of perfect filmmaking, the first would be *8 ½*, for the way Federico Fellini managed to accomplish with film what mostly abstract painters do – namely, to communicate an emotion without ever saying anything in a direct manner, without ever explaining anything, just by a sort of sheer magic”.

After “meeting” the Master, students will discover the main trends and filmmakers in contemporary Italian cinema. Since cinema is a mirror to our world, students will learn a lot about contemporary Italian society through the seventh art.

### Course contents

In the first part of the course, after an introduction to cinema language and Italian cinema, we will focus on Federico Fellini’s career, from his debut as screenwriter during Neorealism to the masterpieces of the ‘50s and ‘60s.

The course will then explore the landscape of contemporary Italian cinema through the works of its most significant directors and their films, including Roberto Benigni, Matteo Garrone, and Paolo Sorrentino, who won the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film in 2014, with *The Great Beauty*. Additionally, we will examine the role of women in Italian cinema, with a focus on *C’è ancora domani* by Paola Cortellesi, a celebrated Italian actress making her directorial debut. Through the screening and analysis of this film, we will also delve into the representation of Italian women on screen.

### Prerequisites

None

### Method of teaching

Screenings of films, Lecture and film analysis, discussion of 7 mandatory films, field trips.

Starting from the second mandatory film, a student will lead the film discussion together with the Professor (students will rotate in this role).

### Course requirements

Interest in the subject.



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## Grading

Class participation (including film discussions and presentations)	50 % of final grade
Final written exam	50 % of final grade

## Rules of conduct

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and no absence/s will be excused. Please consider that Field Trips are considered equal to regular classes and indeed you are expected to attend the visits. Unexcused absences will not be accepted. An excused absence will only be granted if you are seriously ill and can support your claim with a local doctor's certificate dated the day you missed class (therefore you must go to the doctor that same day) that has to be delivered to the Professor or to UCSC International Office. Any other absence will not be excused and will result in not being admitted to the final exam, which corresponds to a 0 (zero) in the final exam.

**Exam Date:** The exam date cannot be re-scheduled. Should the dates of the final exams be moved for force major reasons, UCSC International Office and the Professor will promptly inform you in class and/or via e-mail on the new date agreed. Unexcused absences to the exams will result in a failing grade in the course. In cases of unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or injury on the day of the exams, you must submit a medical certificate and communicate your absence to the Professor and UCSC International Office via email prior to the exam. If the student does not justify his/her absence through sufficient documentation and with adequate notice before the final test, you will receive an automatic Failed. Absences for other unforeseeable circumstances will not be accepted and will result in a failing grade.

## Course reading and materials

All the required readings will be available in a course pack and the lecturer's slides will be available on Blackboard.

### Required reading (excerpts):

- Peter Bondanella, *The cinema of Federico Fellini*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1992.
- William Hope, *Italian Film Directors in the New Millennium*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010.

### Required films (with English subtitles):

- *Le notti di Cabiria* (1956) by F. Fellini
- *La dolce vita* (1959) by F. Fellini
- *Otto e mezzo 8 ½* (1962) by F. Fellini
- *La vita è bella* (1998) by Roberto Benigni
- *La grande bellezza* (*The Great Beauty*, 2013) by Paolo Sorrentino
- *Io Capitano* (*I, Captain*, 2023) by Matteo Garrone
- *C'è ancora domani* (*There's still Tomorrow*, 2023) by Paola Cortellesi

## Schedule

### WEEK 1

#### Lesson 1:



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Introduction to cinema language.  
Guidelines to film analysis.

- Screening of *Le notti di Cabiria* (1956) by F. Fellini

### **Lesson 2:**

Introduction to Italian cinema and Federico Fellini.  
Discussion and film analysis (1): *Le notti di Cabiria* (1956) by F. Fellini

- Screening of *La dolce vita* (1959) by F. Fellini

### **Lesson 3:**

- Visit to MIC or other field trip to be confirmed.
- Screening of *Otto e mezzo 8 ½* (1962) by F. Fellini.

### **Lesson 4:**

More on Fellini.  
Discussion and film analysis (2): *La dolce vita* (1959) by F. Fellini

### **Lesson 5:**

Discussion and film analysis (3): *Otto e mezzo 8 ½* (1962) by F. Fellini  
Contemporary Italian cinema.

- Screening of *La vita è bella* (1998) by Roberto Benigni.

## **WEEK 2**

### **Lesson 6:**

Benigni. Discussion and film analysis (4): *La vita è bella* (1998) by Roberto Benigni.  
Sorrentino

- Screening of *The Great Beauty* (2013) by Paolo Sorrentino.

### **Lesson 7:**

More on Sorrentino.  
Discussion and film analysis (5): *The Great Beauty* (2013) by Paolo Sorrentino  
Garrone.

- Screening of *Io, capitano* (2023) by Matteo Garrone
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### **Lesson 8:**

More on Garrone.  
Discussion and film analysis (6): *I, Captain* (2023) by Matteo Garrone.  
Cortellesi and the representation of Italian women on the screen.

- Screening of *C'è ancora domani/There's still Tomorrow* (2023) by Paola Cortellesi.

### **Lesson 9:**

Cortellesi. Discussion and film analysis (7): *C'è ancora domani* (2023) by Paola Cortellesi.



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Final recap.

**Lesson 10:**

Written in class FINAL EXAM.

**FINAL EXAM** It will be a written exam with 2 film analysis on 2 of the 7 mandatory films (as explained in class) and 2 essay questions on the issues discussed in class: all the slides from blackboard; the selected chapters from your textbooks (on your course-pack).

**Bio of instructor**

**Eleonora Fornasari** is a scriptwriter with an MA in International Screenwriting and Production and a Ph.D. from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy. She collaborates with RAI, the Italian national broadcaster, as a writer for both animated TV series (*Igam Ogam*, *Julio Bunny*, *YoYo*, *Topo Gigio*, *The Game Catchers*, *Mini-Heroes of the Forest*) and live-action shows (*Social King 2.0*, *La TV Ribelle*, *La Posta di YoYo*, *Piccolo Mostro*, *S-Fidiamoci*). In addition to her work in television, she is a children's author, with a diverse portfolio of books and novels for various age groups.

Eleonora is an adjunct professor of "Literature, Cinema, and TV Series for Kids and Young Audiences" in the *Art and Industry of Narration* program (Master's Degree in Language Sciences and Foreign Literatures) at Università Cattolica. She also serves as an assistant professor for "History and Industry of International Cinema" and teaches courses such as "Digital Journalism and Digital Media in Italy" and "The Female Character in Italian Contemporary Literature and Culture," focusing on the representation of female characters in Italian cinema and literature, as part of the university's International Curriculum winter programs. Additionally, she writes cinema and TV reviews for various online platforms.

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